

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90

The digital divide is at its most stark on Tribal lands. While only 2.1% of people living in urban areas lack access to fixed broadband at speeds of 25/3 Mbps, that figure rises to over 35% on Tribal lands. We see the same pattern on the mobile side with only 9.5% of people lacking access to LTE at 10/3 Mbps in urban areas compared with over 36% on Tribal lands.

In my meetings with leaders of Tribal communities, the lack of broadband deployment has been a top area of concern. I have pledged my efforts to work with all stakeholders on addressing this issue because access to broadband means access to economic opportunity, education, and healthcare. Everyone should have a fair shot at digital opportunity.

That is why, back in August 2017, I was pleased to cast one of my first votes as an FCC Commissioner in favor of this order. It recognizes that carriers deploying broadband infrastructure on Tribal lands face unique challenges—from tough terrain to sparse populations—and thus higher deployment costs. We address this today by increasing the amount of operating expenses that carriers can recover from the Universal Service Fund. This decision will provide additional funding to carriers providing both voice and broadband services, and thus provide greater incentives for providers to serve Tribal lands.

While I would have preferred for the full Commission to move more quickly in acting on this important item, I am glad that it is now across the finish line. And I am glad that this step will help encourage broadband deployment in some of the areas where it is most lacking. I look forward to continuing to work with all stakeholders on ways that we can continue to incentivize broadband infrastructure deployment.